

CITY OF NORWALK  
BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION  
APRIL 2, 2012

**ATTENDANCE:** Fred Wilms, Chairman; Mayor Richard Moccia, James Clark, Michael Kolman, John Federici, James Fiegenbaum, Leo Mellow.

**STAFF:** Erin Halsey, City Clerk; Thomas Hamilton, Finance Director;  
Robert Barron, Director of Management & Budgets.

**OTHER:** Hal Alvord, Director, Department of Public Works;  
Katherine Hebert, Norwalk Parking Authority,

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Chairman Wilms, who asked those in attendance to state their names and announced that the above members were present and there was a quorum.

Approval of Minutes: March 5, 14, 21, 2012

March 5, 2012

Mr. Federici noted that his name was misspelled under attendance and throughout and requested that it be corrected from Frederici to Federici. Mr. Barron noted that on page four, paragraph three, the end of the first sentence should be changed from “because they could not find sponsors” to “based upon the recommendation of the association.”

**\*\* CHAIRMAN WILMS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES FROM MARCH 5, 2012 AS AMENDED WITH CORRECTIONS NOTED.**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

March 14, 2012 – Special Meeting

Mr. Wilms noted that his name was misspelled, and that the

second paragraph on page one was inaccurate as this subject was not covered and requested that it be stricken. It was noted that the motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Federici and that there is no second required for this Committee.

**\*\* CHAIRMAN WILMS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES FROM MARCH 14, 2012 SPECIAL MEETING AS AMENDED WITH CORRECTIONS NOTED.**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

March 21, 2012.

Mr. Wilms noted that his name was misspelled, and requested that it be corrected.

**\*\* CHAIRMAN WILMS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES FROM MARCH 21, 2012 MEETING AS AMENDED WITH CORRECTION NOTED.**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**SPECIAL APROPRIATIONS AGENDA** - Mr. Wilms noted that there were no items on the agenda.

**TRANSFER AGENDA:** Mr. Hamilton presented the following transfers:

**CITY OF NORWALK TRANSFERS 2011-12**  
**BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION**

**FISCAL YEAR 2011-12:**

**RECREATION AND PARKS:**

<b>From</b>		<b>To</b>		<b>Amount</b>
01-6022-5130	Wages & Salary – Temp.	01-6031-5715	Picnic Tables	\$4,999
01-6036-5140	Wages & Salary – P/T	01-6031-5715	Picnic Tables	4,999
01-6025-5325	Memberships & Dues	01-6031-5715	Picnic Tables	\$ 700
				\$ 10,698

This transfer is to cover purchase of Picnic Tables.

Finance recommends approval.

<b>From</b>		<b>To</b>		<b>Amount</b>
01-6024-5130	Wages & Salary – Temp.	01-6033-5267	Plumbing, Htg. & Elect. Supp.	\$ 8,000
01-6022-5130	Wages & Salary – Temp.	01-6033-5267	Plumbing, Htg. & Elect. Supp.	8,000
01-6027-5130	Wages & Salary – Temp.	01-6033-5267	Plumbing, Htg. & Elect. Supp.	\$ 1,588
				\$17,588

This transfer is to cover repairs and maintenance of electric lines at Calf Pasture Beach due to hurricane damage.

Finance recommends approval.

<b>From</b>		<b>To</b>		<b>Amount</b>
01-6031-5375	Clay & Ballfield Prods.	01-6031-5585	Park Improvements	\$ 7,000
01-6023-5130	Wages & Salary – Temp.	01-6031-5585	Park Improvements	\$ 5,000
				\$ 12,000

This transfer is to cover masonry repointing, beach house walls, small roof repairs and replacement of awning at Calf Pasture Beach.

Finance recommends approval.

**LIBRARY:**

<b>From</b>		<b>To</b>		<b>Amount</b>
01-6200-5241	Electricity	01-6200-5242	Water	\$4,000
01-6200-5241	Electricity	01-6200-5246	Heating Fuels	4,500
01-6200-5241	Electricity	01-6200-5258	Other Prof. Services	5,000
01-6200-5263	Electricity	01-6200-5295	Seminar & Conf. Fees	2,000
01-6200-5241	Electricity	01-6200-5281	Mileage Reimbursement	\$ 2,000
				\$17,500

This transfer is to cover deficits in several accounts throughout the Library.

Mr. Hamilton presented the background on the transfers requested and stated that there are funds available to cover the transfers. Mayor Moccia asked if the items for repairs at Calf Pasture included FEMA reimbursement, and Mr. Hamilton replied yes. He added that it will take some time for the reimbursement to be received, and they are looking to have the work done, so this transfer is to fund what will be reimbursed at approx. 75%.

**\*\* CHAIRMAN WILMS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE TRANSFERS AS PRESENTED.**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Adoption of Tentative FY 2012-13 Operating Budget**

Mr. Hamilton presented the budget and stated that this will be forwarded to the Common Council as a tentative 2012-13 operating budget totaling \$296.8 million, which represents a 3-percent increase over the current year budget. He explained that the impact to mill rate is a 2.8% increase which translates to an increase to the annual property tax bill on the median single-family home in the Norwalk's 4th Taxing District by \$170. Mr. Hamilton stated that this tentative budget meets exactly the approved cap that was set by the Common Council, so there's no wiggle room to add anything back at this point.

Mr. Kolman asked about the \$30,000 difference and Mr. Hamilton explained that this was due to intergovernmental grants and that number was actually the \$296.8 million budget, as it stands. Mr. Kolman asked where this reduction was funded from, and Mr. Hamilton replied the DPW rock salt fund.

Mr. Hamilton, reminded that the Board will adopt the final 2012-13 operating budget on the first Monday in May, and between now and adoption of the final budget May 7, he will be monitoring the unfolding state budget and its impact on state aid to Norwalk. Mr. Barron added that Norwalk stands to receive an additional \$24,000 through the Education Cost Sharing Formula. Mr. Hamilton added that the Finance Department will continue to monitor open issues.

Mr. Clark stated that this past budget cycle has been very tough, and he wished there were different circumstances. He added that none of us like taxes and with this tough year, once again we all have to share the pain. He added that this is what this budget represents is an example of what is needed for us to keep our city functioning as best we can make it, and we all have to share that pain and that this is the best of a very difficult situation.

Mr. Federici stated that he felt this budget was a good balance as it represented a tax increase of 50 cents a day or \$170 per year, which is fairly manageable for most.

Mayor Moccia thanked Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Barron for pulling together the numbers and in dealing with all the Departments, Boards, and the public with all the factors that impact this year's

budget. He added that it is a representative budget of what the city can do, and that he has said it at every meeting since he has been mayor, that nobody wants anything cut but nobody wants higher taxes, and that this budget is a good balance.

Chairman Wilms stated that he echoed many of the Mayor's comments and thanked all members of the Board for their hard work. He added that the impact of rising benefit costs, health care and growing pension contributions eat into what a municipal government is supposed to do. He acknowledged the controversies surrounding closing the museum and stated that he has been disappointed in the way the museum has been run and that it is time to seek other options to better showcase the history of the City. He added that he is pleased to see his move forward to another direction. He stated that relative to the contract with the 2405 Union with outsourcing garbage pickup, he did not see the supporting data or arguments and their proposal did not provide the depth. He added that the plan as presented by the DPW was very factual and enabled workers to keep their jobs and he was pleased to support this as a win-win recommendation. He stated that both proposals represent sound practices in the best interests of the City. He described the tentative budget as a balanced approach that seeks to keep taxes down and programs and services going while maintaining the AAA bond rating, and although there was a recommendation to use OPEB funds to fund the budget shortfall, that crosses a red line and is not a worthy endeavor. He added that we've been able to chart those waters to maintain the AAA rating with a balanced approach to the City's spending plan, and he is happy to support this budget.

**\*\* CHAIRMAN WILMS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE ADOPTION OF TENTATIVE FY 2012-13 OPERATING BUDGET AS PRESENTED. MOTION PASSED WITH SIX VOTES IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED, AND ONE ABSTENTION (MELLOW).**

#### Approve Parking Authority Approved Budget FY12-13

Ms. Hebert presented the Parking Authority's FY2012-13 budget stating that it represents an overall 2.37% increase in expenses. Ms. Hebert referred to the supporting documents in the packet and stated that revenues are estimated to increase 2.16% She highlighted

that Parking violation revenue is lower due to a decrease in ticket writing and represents 15% of total revenue pool (down from 19%). She added that revenues are increased mostly due to higher compliance , longer transaction times, and the implementation of a new multi-facility permit for South Norwalk Railroad Station permit holders for \$100. She explained that this enables them to use the Maritime Garage and has been a successful effort to provide an incentive to go to SoNo businesses. This along with the new daily rate of \$8 at the East Norwalk Railroad Station to provide enhanced service to that station. She then added the new pay by cell feature that is growing and adds an element of convenience to parking customers.

Mr. Federici stated that violation revenue was 23% and now down to 15% is fantastic, and the fact that they are staying longer shows that the new elements of the plan are working well. He added that the staff has done a great job and are on top of these technological advances.

Chairman Wilms stated that he was glad to see budgeting with lower revenue from violations. Ms. Hebert then demonstrated that there is a cell phone application that can be downloaded that allows the pay-by-cell feature and even includes a text time reminder warning message.

**\*\* MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED FY 2012-13 PARKING AUTHORITY BUDGET AS PRESENTED.  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### Approve WPCA Approved Budget FY12-13

Mr. Alvord wanted to add a comment to the Parking Authority that also in the works are pavement sensors that assist with identifying available spaces. He described the sensors that are embedded into the pavement so as not to be affected by snow, ice, and weather elements. He added that they are also is able to capture usage data, which is another positive step in using available technology to enhance parking services and help residents find convenience and parking to be a pleasant experience.

Mr. Alvord highlighted the Water Pollution Control Authority Goals for 2012-13 to

finalize the design and construction of the Pump Station SCADA Telemetry System;  
and to continue to implement Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan.

Mr. Alvord stated that they will be going up to Hartford to meet with the new Commissioner, and there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony to demonstrate to the public the new technology that is in place. He added that Norwalk is ahead of the surrounding towns and they are often consulted for advice from other towns on how to run the Railroad and Parking. Chairman Wilms commented that it is good to see how Norwalk is further along in addressing environmental issues and making strides to keep pollution down.

- \*\* MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED FY 2012-13 WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY BUDGET AS PRESENTED.**
- \*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### Appointment of Auditors for Fiscal year 2011-12

Mr. Hamilton referred to the supporting documents and stated in accordance with General Statutes the City is required to file with the name of the independent auditor designated to conduct the audit. He added that the Council approved a five-year contract with McGladrey & Pullen for fiscal year audits beginning with fiscal year 2009-10 through 2013-14, and McGladrey and Pullen is rotating the Manager assigned to the City of Norwalk to ensure the requisite level of professional independence.

- \*\* MR. CLARK MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF MCGLADREY & PULLEN AS THE CITY'S AUDITORS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011-12.**
- \*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### Approval of Suspense Tax List

Mr. Hamilton presented the memo as submitted by the Tax Collector and explained that these taxes are deemed uncollectible for the reasons noted. He added that the transfer to suspense is part of an annual process., and this year's amount is less than what was transferred to suspense last year, due to increased success in collecting delinquent accounts, and the ongoing refinement of our City of Norwalk

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address database through CASS address validation and certification of our semiannual tax billings and delinquent mailings.

- \*\* **MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED TO APPROVE THE SUSPENSE TAX LIST AS PRESENTED.**
- \*\* **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mayor Moccia asked if the report reflects the tax sale, and Mr. Hamilton referred to the narrative provided by the Tax collector, as follows:

Our tax sale will be held on Monday, July 16, 2012. The tax sale is our primary method of collection enforcement for past due real estate and sewer use charges. We began working on the sale the first week of November. We sent a preliminary mailing to properties scheduled for inclusion. Those 216 properties represented approximately \$4.6 million in past due taxes. As of this writing, we had already collected in excess of \$1.8 mill/on on those properties, with 58 properties already having been brought current. We commissioned 190 title searches to date, and have already received back 184 of them. Our bidder information packet will be available within the next several weeks, and the criteria for inclusion in the tax sale will be finalized within the next week, after we file our liens. Our anticipated criteria is any of the following:

- (1.) \$25,000 or more past due; (2.) three or more years in arrears; or (3.) inclusion in a past sale with no payments made since. We will likely be filing our notices of sale by May 1, and expect to have the list of properties on the city website and posted in the City Hall lobby the same week.

There was a discussion of the number of properties that the Tax Collector expects to handle and Mr. Hamilton reported the number is 200. Mayor Moccia mention that using a service could cost up to \$1million to have a service handle this sale.

**Additional Information –the following reports were submitted:**

- Summary of Special Appropriation – FY 2011-12
- Status of Contingency – FY 20 11-12
- Financial Reports: Year-to-date Capital Budget Report (FY 2011-12)
- Year-to-date Operating Budget Report (FY 2011-12)
- Board of Education Budget Report (FY 2011-12)
- Tax Collector’s Report – March/ Tax Collector’s Narrative – March.
- Salary Accounts
- Fire Overtime/Dispatch Overtime/ Police Overtime.

Mr. Hamilton commented on the overages in the Police overtime account and that it is considerable and estimated at approximately \$500,000. He added that there is an under budgeted amount in the Fire Overtime that somewhat off-sets to help even out the total number, but it is still a concern that needs to be monitored. Mayor Moccia commented that this is on the list of subjects that he will be addressing at the next Police Commissioner’s Meeting.

Mr. Barron noted that the Oak Hills Authority restructuring plan and loan agreement will be sent to the members by email for review.

Adjournment

**\*\* MR. FEDERICI MOVED TO ADJOURN.  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marilyn Knox, Telesco Secretarial Services